



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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Chairman

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August 30, 2013

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray  
Mayor of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Transmittal of D.C. Bill 20-62, "Large Retailer Accountability Act of 2013"

Date of Council Action: July 10, 2013

Dear Mayor Gray:

Attached for your signature is Bill 20-62, the "Large Retailer Accountability Act of 2013." This bill is transmitted in accordance with section 404(e) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, P.L. 93-198. As you know, this bill was approved on both first and second readings by a vote of almost two-thirds of the Council. It enjoys widespread support from residents of the District.

This bill requires billion-dollar retailers to pay an hourly wage of not less than \$12.50. A full-time worker at this rate earns \$26,000 per year. This is insufficient to support a family in the District of Columbia. However, the wage could be even less if benefits such as health insurance are provided, so long as the wage plus benefits totals at least \$12.50. Still, this legislation is necessary because anything less, including the status quo, is unacceptable. For instance, the District's current minimum wage, which equates to \$17,160 per year, is at or below the federal poverty guideline depending on family size.

Good wages are about respect. Intertwined with the basic human need for a livable wage is the fundamental value that an hour of a worker's time is worth something – something more than a poverty wage. Accordingly, a sound economic development strategy for a sustainable District of Columbia should not be predicated on low wage jobs. The District needs jobs, but they should be decent jobs with decent wages.

This past week you and I attended several events related to the 1963 March on Washington. One of the nine printed goals of that March was an increase in the minimum wage. The cry for freedom and justice recognized that economic equality is essential, too. The demand in 1963 was for a \$2 minimum wage. What is \$2 in 1963 worth today? \$15.27. If Dr. King thought \$15.27 an hour was needed for the dream, the least we can do is \$12.50.

I urge your support for this bill.

Sincerely,

Phil Mendelson  
Chairman of the Council

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